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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

Subject: Letter on the need for stronger focus on advancing European legislation to set limit values for substances in the workplace
- Information from the Danish delegation

Delegations will find attached information from the Danish delegation with a view to the EPSCO Council on 11 March 2024 (Any Other Business item).

Letter on the need for stronger focus on advancing European legislation to set limit values for substances in the workplace

Improving health and safety at work is a key task for the EU. Setting limit values for exposure to dangerous substances is an important instrument to prevent health damage caused by exposure at work. The Commission has done well in advancing European legislation to set limit values for dangerous substances in the workplace. Significant progress has been made in recent years, in particular for carcinogenic substances. Thanks to these efforts, health and safety at work is today one of the areas where the EU has had the biggest impact.

Nevertheless, there is still a large number of substances for which there are no limit values at European level. With the current pace of setting limit values, we will not meet the high ambitions set forth by the Commission regarding chemicals at the workplace. Hence, we need to be even more ambitious in updating existing and introducing new EU legislation on dangerous substances in line with the EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027.

Therefore, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden have sent a letter to the Commission urging for an acceleration of the process of revising or setting new limit values, including by increasing the capacity of preparing scientific opinions for chemicals. These priorities should also have a solid place in the next EU strategic framework on health and safety at work and work should already start in the last phase of the current Strategic Framework (2021-2027).
